

SICC MEETING MINUTES

Truman Building, Room 400

May 11, 2006

Members Present

Joan Harter	Melodie Friedebach	Melinda Sanders
Val Lane	Stacey Owsley	Lisa Robbins
Leslie Elpers	Susan Allen	Sharon Hailey
Kathryn Sapp	Kathy Fuger	

Members Not Present

Doug Ommen	Ronald Roberts	Elizabeth Spaugh
Patsy Carter	Margaret Franklin	

DESE Staff Present

Joyce Jackman	Bill Connelly	Sarah Parker
Amanda Wogan	Dale Carlson	Mary Corey

To review copies of handouts referenced in the minutes below, go to the following website:
<http://dese.mo.gov/divspeced/FirstSteps/SICCMtgdates.htm> and click on “Handouts” for the May 11, 2006 meeting.

Call to Order, Welcome, and Introductions

Joan Harter called the meeting to order at 8:37 a.m.

Approval of SICC Minutes – Stacey Owsley made a motion to approve the minutes with the following changes. Susan Allen seconded the motion. Motion passed.

A correction to January Meeting Minutes is as follows:

Add Joan Harter to Subcommittee list.

Special Presentations

Provider Credentialing by Sarah Parker – handouts were provided (refer to the handout). Sarah summarized the process planned for on-going provider credentialing. The process will include a letter to all providers after completion of their initial First Steps (FS) credentialing informing them of the continuing professional development (PD) requirements. Those requirements include completion of 24 hours of additional PD over a 3 year period in areas associated with early intervention. This would be 8 hours per year. A question was raised regarding this requirement and its application for service coordinators. Several members expressed opinions that SC should be a part of this on-going credentialing process.

An on-going credentialing form is currently under development and will be available on the First Steps website as soon as edits are completed.

Concerns were expressed regarding the Missouri qualifications for certain providers in the First Steps system. A suggestion was made to have the CSPD committee address the concerns. The requirements for provider qualifications are outlined in the state plan and should changes be recommended, they would require a state plan amendment. It was suggested that certain degrees and/or certifications in early childhood development and experience be require and added to the state plan.

It was proposed that the letter and credentialing information be mailed to providers in July. Clarification may be needed regarding the provider's use of PD activities taken prior to September 2006. The requirement for additional PD will either start on September 30, 2006 (see letter) or six (6) months after a new provider completes their first fiscal year in the system. 8 hours must be completed in each of the next three fiscal years. A question was asked regarding the requirement of a provider to take a variety of PD activities of cross multiple competency levels. DESE will consider adding this to the letter.

Provisional motion to make amendment to State Plan if not listed that adds requires a degree in EC Family and Child and Development without education. Sharon Hailey made a motion and Kathy Fuger seconded. A check of the State Plan indicated that the optional qualifications were addressed - Motion withdrawn.

Kathy Fuger made a motion and Sue Allen seconded. Motion passed to mail the letter and credentialing information in July.

Complaint Process by Amanda Wogan – handouts were provided (refer to handouts) Amanda provided an overview of the complaint processes available in First Steps. She described differences between formal child complaints as outlined in IDEA and informal parent concerns received by the Division. She also described the due process system, and mediation. Detailed information on the complaint process may be reviewed in the parent rights brochure (see handout) or on the First Steps web site.

Amanda explained the internal procedures for the Division's call tracking system. A question was asked about the SICC members getting an update on formal and informal complaints.

Lisa Robbins wanted to go on record stating that encouraging families to file a formal complaint as a method to influence future legislative decisions is not the direction that should be taken. The program is better served if it tries to work out the situation before encouraging the filing of a formal complaint. Focus on positive outcomes in order to resolve issues.

Billing Concerns – Joyce Jackman

If a family has questions about a line item on their Explanation of Benefits (EOB), a standard letter will go out from the CFO informing the provider of the issue(s) brought to DESE's attention. The provider has a week to ten days to provide documentation supporting their claim submission. The CFO has been instructed to recover money from providers unable to document the provision of services claimed. If the child is on Medicaid, we reimburse the money received for the claim to Medicaid. No procedures are in place to address providers with multiple billing complaints. Providers are enrolled through an open enrollment process which is advantageous to

First Steps since it eliminates many of the OA bidding and contract procedures. The open enrollment process allows anyone meeting FS provider qualifications to enroll and participate in the program.

A suggestion made that the SPOEs and SC keep information stating any problems with a particular provider. Currently there is no written procedure established regarding how to handle this process.

DHSS stated that they have provider agreements and their agreement includes a clause allowing DHSS to cancel the agreement based on performance. Val asked Joyce to bring back wording to add to our provider agreement. A question was asked if the Evaluation and Assessment teams are included under the provider agreements. Joyce will have to look at.

Budget by Dale Carlson – handouts were provided (refer to handout)

Report A – “Monthly Expenditure and Revenue Report” does not indicate anything unusual other than planned expenditures continue to come in less than projected at the beginning of the year. This takes pressure off the system from a cash flow perspective unlike in previous years. It appears that many of the steps we have taken over the past couple of years to rein in program costs is beginning to have some effect. First Steps will have sufficient funds to complete this fiscal year. There was some discussion concerning the budgeted training costs (\$50,000) compared to the training cost expended-to-date (\$2,564). The primary reason for this minimal budget drawdown in the Part C system is that the planned annual license cost for MOODLE/TYPO3, a program used in the on-line training process to schedule, provide assessment, scoring, etc, is also used in the Part B system where the costs were charged in FY06. Some of this cost may be allocated to First Steps in FY07.

Report B – “Expenditures for Direct Services by SPOE” shows this downward trend in costs. Two years ago, our average monthly cost for direct services was approximately \$1.8 million per month. Through April 2006, the monthly cost for direct services is running \$1.4 million. We are seeing a slight drop in the number of children in the system which could be due to a better evaluation process and a referral system that is sending better referrals to the SPOEs. This drop in child count will tend to cause the cost per child to show an increase when compared to previous years.

DESE Updates

State auditors review – Joyce Jackman

DESE initially met with two representatives from the Auditors office on May 2nd. DESE provided copies of the RFP re-bid for Phase I and II contracts, CFO contract, consultants’ contract, a copy of the original and revised provider payee agreement, all monitoring documents (both state and federal) from the last two years. The auditors discussed what can be expected during the audit process and their plans for the beginning. The audit was prompted by the Kansas City (KC) news report on the program and other complaints that have been directed to their office. The audit’s focus is on both the program and the financial aspects of First Steps. The auditors will be verifying that the DESE’s monitoring procedures are accurate and they will conduct verification visits in the field. There is no time frame for when the audit will be completed. The auditor’s office has authority to review program records and assure DESE that confidentiality would be maintained at all times.

A question was asked regarding who is to provide information from the previous SPOE? The auditor has been given a report of where existing files are currently located and they have access to DESE files/records, if needed. If they want to interview people that are no longer part of the FS system, we are not sure what their system will be to locate those individuals. So far they have not hesitated to ask for clarification when they do not understand something that they are reviewing.

It was asked if OSEP needed to be informed of the audit. DESE responded that there is not a requirement to inform OSEP when such activities occur within the state.

Part C SPP Letter – Joyce Jackman

Joyce stated that DESE is preparing the response to OSEP to meet the June 2006 deadline. The categories for the June report include: corrective action on non-compliance, long term outstanding monitoring issues with SPOEs and their correction and 45-day timelines; all other issues have until February 2007 to respond.

Part C Application Submission – Joyce Jackman stated the application was submitted to OSEP on April 6th via e-mail. There was only one public comment and that was from Val Lane. She requested that the chart show the percentage of allocated Division of Special Education FTE dedicated to Part C administration.

DESE Activities related to SPOE Contracts – Joyce Jackman

Initially the CFO suggested hosting regular conference calls during the transition period for the SPOEs to ask questions about issues related to the “splits and merges” of data from the old SPOE regions into the new regions. The success of these initial conference calls prompted additional calls enabling DESE to identify priority areas where the SPOE staff determined they needed assistance. OSEP’s SPP response letter to the state, FCP, WebSPOE system issues, and other contract transition issues were discussed. DESE identified SPOE offices where immediate on-site assistance was required and provided help through contracts with temporary personnel agencies, and consultant visits. Amanda Wogan and the regional consultant provided one or two day trainings on the intake and eligibility process in each SPOE region and provided a questions and answer session for SPOE staff to address additional questions. DMH service coordinators also attended these trainings.

SPOE Operations – Gretchen Gambon, Julia Hillyer, Kathy Daulton
Handouts provided (refer to handouts)

Regions 1 and 2

Julia Hillyer discussed the events that Regions 1 and 2 held during First Steps week. She told about the “Show Me St. Louis report, Rivers Bend AEYC Conference, First Steps Day at the Mall, and Breakfast with the Legislators. (See handout for details.)

Margaret Pickett wanted to recognize Julie Darlington as a member of the RICC in Region 1 whose efforts contributed to the success of the activities reported.

Kathy Daulton (Region 4) reported that two RICCs have come together as one RICC. They are looking at the St. Louis RICC for successful ideas that may be duplicated in the Northwest. They did a joint presentation with parents-as-teachers and with Department of Family Services.

They will be doing more QIRS training for providers. NPA is an issue in the Northwest that the RICC is addressing.

Phase II – Gretchen Gambon – handout provided (refer to handout)

Gretchen reported on behalf of the new SPOEs. She addressed what is working well, issues that vary with geography, and current concerns

Data Reports

NPA report – Mary Corey – handout provided (refer to handout)

Mary Corey presented data on No Provider Available (NPA) as entered by SPOEs into the web system. Data showed statewide decreases in the number of NPA authorization since February. Some SPOE directors indicated that the data provided did not tell the whole story surrounding provider availability issues. The possibility of collecting anecdotal information was discussed. Other areas of discussion were the attempts that are being made to find providers, the need for guidance from DESE on the entry of NPA data into the web system and the time it takes for new providers to enroll with the CFO. Guidance from the Council is needed regarding how to address the NPA issue. It was also mentioned that Identix has been a problem related to provider enrollment.

Policy Sub-committee – Their task from the previous SICC meeting was to develop a Sunshine Law policy. The SICC members will vote at next meeting regarding the recommendations from the policy sub-committee.

Stakeholders Issues – Valeri Lane

Suggest that RICC and LICC have an open agenda item for all their meetings. A question was raised regarding the impact of the Sunshine Law on RICC meetings. Melodie responded that she did not believe that RICC would be covered under the Sunshine Law. DESE will check and report back on this issue.

Mileage Reimbursement – Valeri Lane

Val reported that the issue of provider availability and how to get providers out in the field is related to a lack of mileage reimbursement. When reimbursement stopped several years ago, providers stopped driving past certain distances to provide services. What options exist or do we abandon the model and tell the family to drive into other counties to receive their services?

One proposal was to have each SPOE study their region to see how many miles and amount of time providers are spending in travel. We would need this information before we could request additional appropriations to cover mileage reimbursement.

Leslie indicated that she sent data to Dale with approximate number of miles per year providers travel in her area.

It was suggested that we need to examine all options to see what we can do to address provider travel prior to doing a study. Suggestions included: conduct a one month sample, select only those families referred in the next several months, make random selections to study for a 90-day pilot, survey all providers to find out what it would take to get them to travel a specific number of miles. The question was raised as to why we reimburse the family but not the providers?

The following volunteered to discuss the options and to report their discussion at the next SICC meeting: Sherry was willing to develop a survey that could be used to pilot some questions for providers; Leslie, Kathy, and Val offered to help.

Sunshine Law Policy/Custodian of Records – Valeri Lane

E-mail exchanges are open to public record if it goes to 50% of the committee – direction was given to copy Faith, on e-mails applicable to this standard. This provides a way for all e-mails to be archived in an SICC folder and subfolders and will assist the custodian of records to respond to disclosure requests.

SICC Appointments – The council is still waiting to hear from the Governor's office regarding SICC appointments.

Appointment of Nominating Committee – Sharon Hailey, Joan Harter, Val Lane, Kathryn Sapp

New Business

Appointment of Nominating Committee

Joan Harter is resigning as co-chair due to family priorities, Effective June 30, 2006. She will write a letter to Gov. Blunt to see if she can expedite the appointments since her resignation will leave only one parent on the council. Also, Val's term as co-chair expires on June 30, 2006. The nominating committee will nominate individuals to serve as co-chairs. Given the current situation involving a limited number of parents on the council, Val asked for a motion to allow the co-chairs to exist without one representing parents while the council is waiting the governor's appointment of additional parent's representatives.

A motion was presented by Sharon Hailey to contact Elizabeth Spaugh to see if she will serve as co-chair to finish out Joan's term and if she is not able to do that, then the nominating committee will look for co-chairs.

Motion was seconded by- Kathy Fuger. The motion passed and Val will contact Elizabeth.

Next Meeting Agenda:

Member Issues

Question/Issues related to Module training (Lisa Robbins and Karen Jacoby will e-mail questions ahead of the meeting to Sarah)

Joyce will explain how DESE can terminate a provider agreement if the provider is found to consistently submit inaccurate billing or if concerns are raised about performance issues.

Recent Medicaid bulletin

Follow-up from Nominating Committee

Draft Sunshine Policy

Draft Parent Handbook

Adjourn

Sue Allen moved to adjourn. Stacey Owsley seconded the motion. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 3:08 p.m.